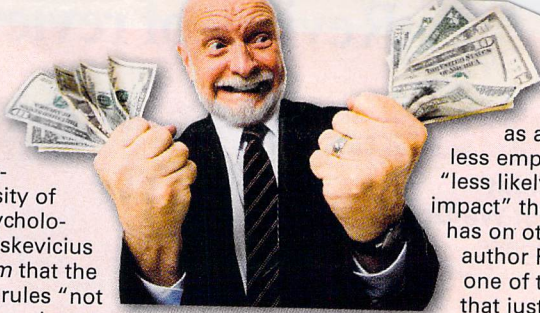


# Wealth breeds selfishness

The rich really are different: They're more likely than other folks to lie, cheat, and steal. Researchers conducted a series of experiments on more than 1,000 people with annual incomes ranging from \$16,000 to \$150,000, and found that those with the most money were also the most likely to behave unethically—cheating to win a \$50 prize, taking candy from children, and pocketing extra change given to them by mistake. In one experiment, drivers of pricier cars were four times more likely than those who drove cheaper cars to cut off

other drivers and refuse to wait for pedestrians. University of Minnesota psychologist Vidas Griskevicius tells *Wired.com* that the wealthy break rules "not because they are desperate," as many criminals are, "but because they feel entitled and want to get ahead." Being rich can be isolating, since wealthy people are less dependent on social bonds to get along:



*Who needs other people?*

as a result, they have less empathy and are "less likely to perceive the impact" that their behavior has on others, says study author Paul Piff. Indeed, one of the tests showed that just thinking about wealth can trigger selfishness. Low-income volunteers who were asked to imagine they were rich behaved as badly as real rich people, pilfering candy that researchers told them was intended for children.